

DUNNO'S ADVENTURES

Nikolai NOSOV



The MITES of **FLOWER TOWN**



RADUGA PUBLISHERS



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The MITES *of* FLOWER TOWN

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nce upon a time, in a town in fairyland, lived some people called the Mites. They were called the Mites because they were very tiny. The biggest of them was no bigger than a pine cone.

Their town was very pretty. Around every house grew daisies, dandelions, and honeysuckle, and the streets were all named after flowers: Blue-bell Street, Daisy Lane, and Primrose Avenue. That is why the town was called Flower Town. It stood on the bank of a little brook. The Mites called it Cucumber River because so many cucumbers grew on its banks.

On the other side of the brook was a wood. The Mites made boats out of birch-bark and crossed the brook in them when they went to gather nuts, berries, and mushrooms in the wood. It was hard for the Mites to pick berries because they were so small.



When they picked nuts they had to climb the bushes and take saws with them to cut off the stems, for the Mites could not pick the nuts by hand.

They sawed off mushrooms, too—sawed them off at the very ground, then cut them into pieces and carried them home on their shoulders like logs.

There were two kinds of Mites—boy-Mites and girl-Mites. The boy-Mites wore long trousers or short breeches held up by braces, and the girl-Mites wore dresses made out of all sorts of bright stuffs. The boy-Mites couldn't be bothered to comb their hair, and so they cut it short, but the girl-Mites wore their hair long. They loved to comb it in all sorts of pretty ways. Some wore it in long plaits with ribbons woven into them. Others wore it hanging about their shoulders with big bows on top.

The boy-Mites were so proud of being boys that they would have nothing to do with the girl-Mites. And the girl-Mites were so proud of being girls that they would not make friends with the



boy-Mites. If a girl-Mite caught sight of a boy-Mite coming down the street, she would cross to the other side. And she was quite right, for some of the boy-Mites were so nasty they would be sure to give her a shove or pull her hair or call her a horrid name.

They were not *all* like this, of course, but you couldn't tell what they were like by looking at them, and so the girl-Mites decided to cross the street every time, just in case. Sometimes you could hear a boy-Mite call a girl-Mite "Stuck-up!" and the girl-Mite would call back "Bully!" or something else just as rude.

Perhaps you don't believe this. Perhaps you think such things don't happen in real life. Well, nobody says they do. Real life is one thing, and fairy-tale life is another. Anything can happen in fairy-tales.

In one of the houses in Blue-bell Street lived sixteen boy-Mites. The most important of them was Doono. He was named Doono because he did know everything, and he knew everything because he was always reading books. There were books on his bed and





under his bed. You couldn't find a spot in his room without a book on it.

He learned all sorts of things from these books, and so everybody admired him and did whatever he said. He always dressed in black, and when he sat down at his writing-table with his spectacles on and began reading a book, he looked for all the world like a professor.

In this same house lived Dr. Pillman, who looked after the Mites when they fell ill. He always wore a white coat and a white cap with a tassel on it. Here, too, lived the famous tinker Bendum and his helper Twistum. And here lived Treacly-Sweeter who, as everyone knew, had a great weakness for fizzy drinks with lots of syrup in them. He was very polite. He liked to have people call him Treacly-Sweeter and was very unhappy when they called him simply Sweeter.

Besides these there was a hunter named Shot. He had a little dog he called Dot and a gun that shot corks. There was also an artist named Blobs and a musician named Trills. The others were called Swifty, Crumps, Mums, Roly-Poly, Scatter-brain, and two brothers, P'raps and Prob'ly. But the most famous of them all was a Mite by the name of







Dunno. He was called Dunno because he did *not* know everything—in fact he did not know *anything*.

Dunno wore a bright blue hat, bright yellow trousers, a bright orange shirt, and a bright green tie. He was very fond of bright colours. He would dress himself up in his bright clothes and go wandering about the streets making up all sorts of tales and telling them to everybody he met. He loved to tease the girl-Mites. As soon as a girl-Mite caught sight of his orange shirt coming down the street she would turn round and run home.





Dunno had a friend named Gunky who lived in Daisy Lane. He and Dunno would sit and talk for hours on end. They quarrelled twenty times a day, but they always made it up.

One day something happened to Dunno that made him the talk of the town. He had gone for a walk in the fields all by himself. Suddenly a cockchafer came flying past and struck him on the back of the head. Dunno turned a somersault in the air and fell flat on the ground. The cockchafer kept on flying and was soon out of sight. Dunno jumped up and looked round to see what had struck him, but there was nothing to be seen.

"What could have hit me?" he thought. "Something must have fallen on me."

He looked up in the air, but there was nothing there either—nothing but the sun which was shining brightly in the sky.

"It must have been the sun," he decided. "A piece must have broken off and fallen on my head."

He turned round and set out for home, and on the way he met a friend named Glass-Eye.

Glass-Eye was a famous astronomer. He knew how to make magnifying glasses out of bits of broken bottle. Everything looked bigger when seen through these glasses. By putting several of them together he had made a telescope with which he studied the moon and the stars.

"Glass-Eye," said Dunno, "a very strange thing has happened. A piece of the sun dropped off and hit me on the head."





"What are you saying?" laughed Glass-Eye. "If a piece of the sun had hit you, it would have smashed you to smithereens. The sun is enormous. It's even bigger than our earth."

"It couldn't be," said Dunno. "The sun is no bigger than a saucer."

"It just seems to be because it's so very far away. The sun is a great ball of fire. I've seen it through my telescope. If just a little bit of it broke off it would smash our whole town."

"Think of that!" said Dunno. "I never knew the sun was so big. I'll go and tell everybody about it, they may not have heard. But take another look at the sun through your telescope. Maybe it does have a piece out of it after all."

Dunno set out for home again, and he said to everybody he met:



"Have you heard about the sun? It's bigger than our whole earth. Yes, it is! And a terrible thing has happened: a piece has broken off and is falling on us. It'll strike any minute and smash us all to smithereens. Go and ask Glass-Eye if you don't believe me."

Everybody laughed at him, because they knew he was always making up stories. But Dunno kept shouting as he ran home:

"Save yourselves, everybody! A piece of the sun is falling!"

"A piece of what?"

"Of the sun! Hurry up! It'll strike any minute, and that'll be the end of us! You don't know about the sun! It's bigger than our earth!"

"Nonsense!"





"No nonsense at all! Glass-Eye told me so. He saw it through his telescope!"

Everybody rushed outdoors and looked up at the sun. They looked at it until their eyes began to water. They looked at it until there really did seem to be a piece out of it.

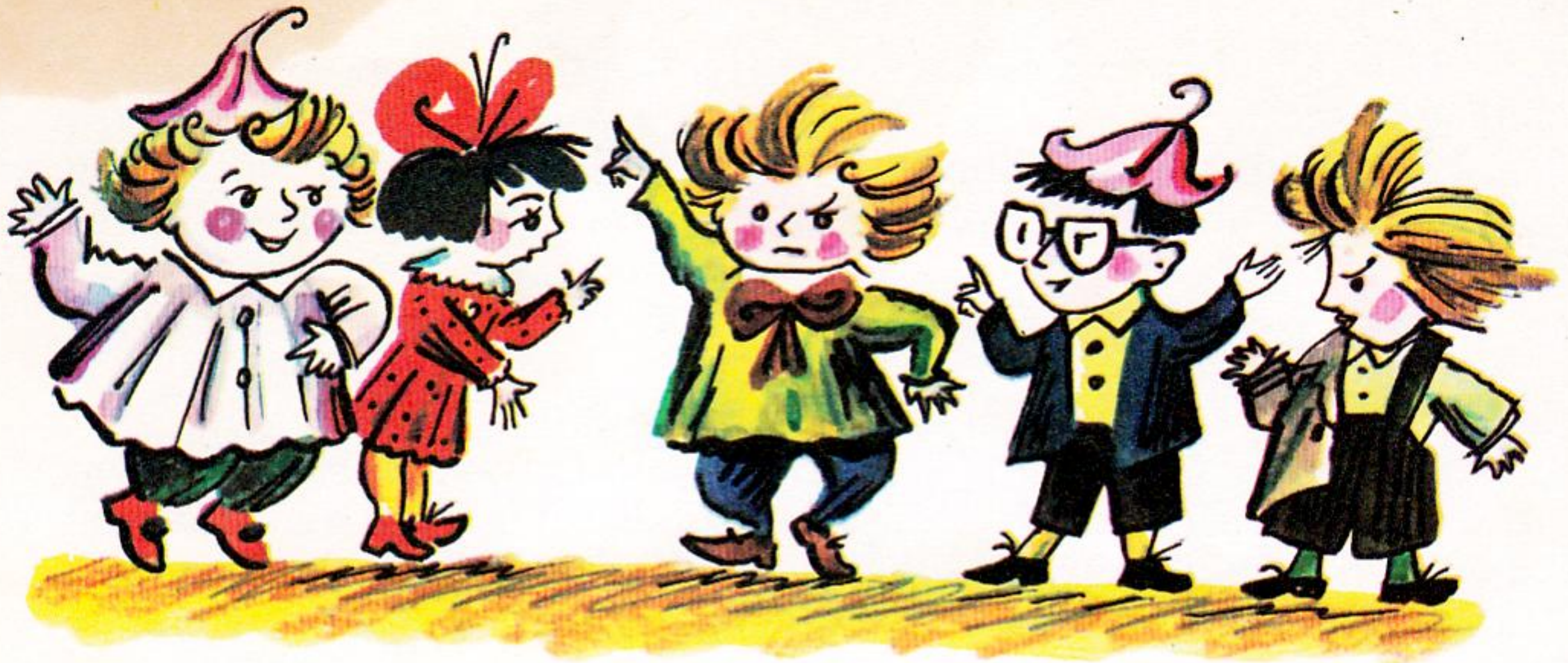
"Save yourselves!" shouted Dunno. "Save yourselves as best you can!"

The Mites ran for their things. Blobs snatched up his paints and brushes. Trills snatched up his fiddle and banjo and French horn. Dr. Pillman rushed about the house searching for his medicine bag, which had got mislaid. Roly-Poly snatched up his galoshes and umbrella and was just dashing through the gate when he heard Doono call out:

"Steady there now! What are you afraid of? You know what a nit-wit Dunno is. This is just one of his ideas."

"Ideas!" cried Dunno. "Go and ask Glass-Eye, I tell you."





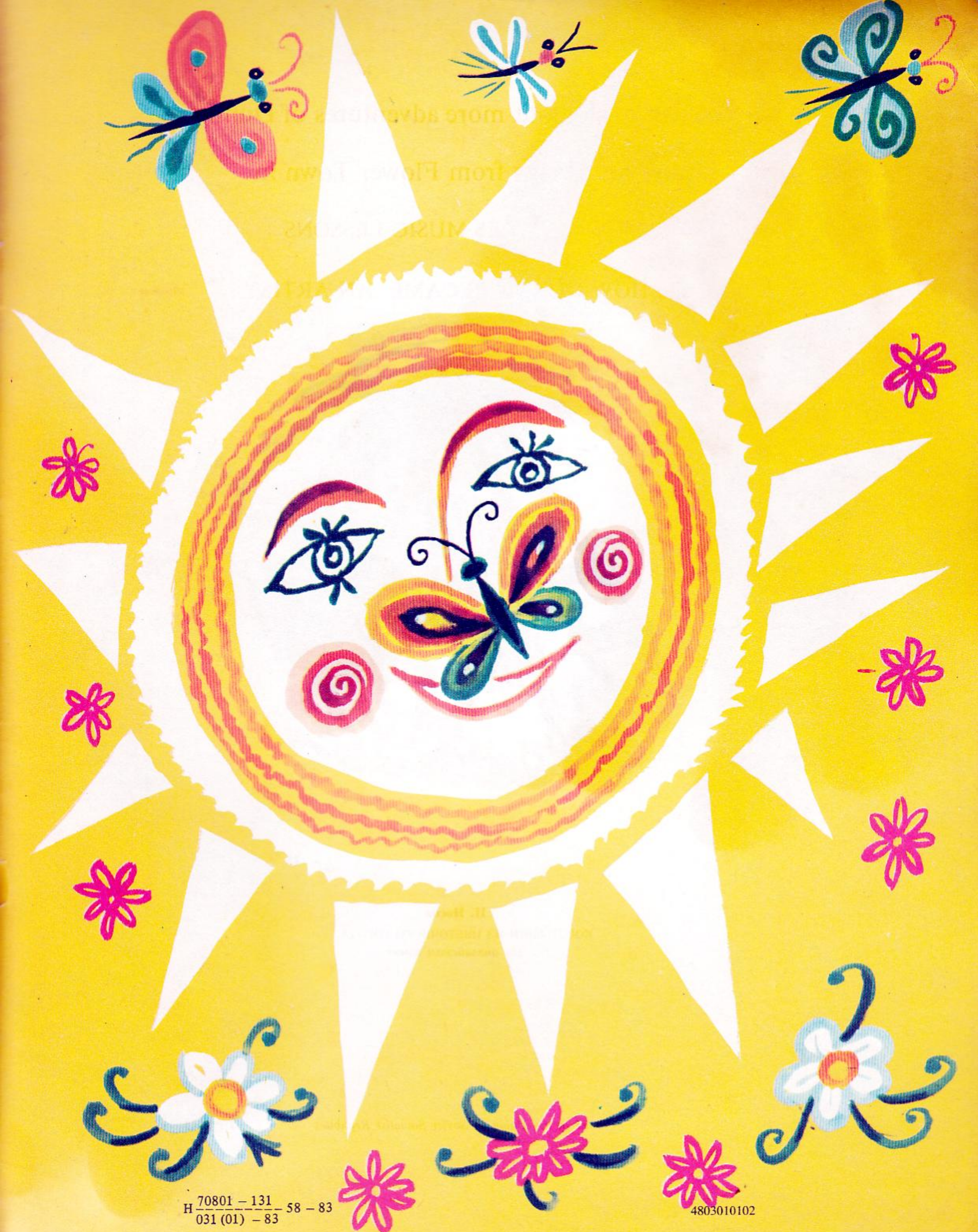
So they all ran to Glass-Eye and found out that it was, indeed, only something Dunno had made up. How they did laugh!

"How could we have believed such a silly thing?" they said.

"How, indeed?" said Dunno. "Why, I even believed it myself!"

That's the sort of funny fellow Dunno was!





You can read about more adventures of Dunno
and his friends from Flower Town in
DUNNO TAKES MUSIC LESSONS
and HOW DUNNO BECAME AN ARTIST.



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